

**At a meeting of the WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE held at WASHINGTON WETLAND CENTRE on THURSDAY, 1<sup>ST</sup> JULY, 2010 at 6.00 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Kelly in the Chair

Councillors Cuthbert, Fletcher, Miller, Padgett, I. Richardson, Scaplehorn, Timmins, D. Trueman, H. Trueman, Wake, P. Walker and Williams.

Mike Poulter	-	City Services
Susan Brown	-	City Services
Karon Purvis	-	Chief Executive's
Victoria Glass	-	Chief Executive's
Meg Boustead	-	Children's Services
Neil Revely	-	Health, Housing and Adult Services
Paul Wood	-	Office of the Chief Executive
Marion Marshall	-	Office of the Chief Executive
Raj Singh	-	Children's Services
Sue Morgan	-	Children's Services
Jacqui Reeves	-	Washington Mind
Steve Dodds	-	Nexus

Members of the Washington Community.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Chamberlin and Snowdon.

**Declarations of Interest**

Item 3 – Community Action: Reviewing Progress and Agreeing Next Steps

Councillor Fletcher declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item as a Governor of Usworth Colliery Primary School.

Councillor Kelly declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item as a Member of the Usworth Banner Group and vacated the chair for that item.

Councillor Miller declared a personal interest in the item due to having a business relationship in the past with EBC.

Councillor Walker declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item as a Member of the F Pit Banner Group and a personal interest as an employee of Gentoo.

Councillor Williams declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to the EBC application and a personal interest as a Member of the Glebe Banner Project.

### **Minutes of the Last Meeting of the Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2010**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2010 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **Community Action: Identifying New Issues and Agreeing Actions**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which informed Members of the agreed priorities, work plan and new governance processes identifying links between issues and activity, streamlining the reporting process.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Karon Purvis, Area Officer advised that at the May meeting of the Committee, the 4 key priorities had been identified:-

- Reducing Health Inequalities.
- Help local people access employment opportunities and improve the business offer in Washington.
- Address Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).
- Responsive Local Services (RLS).

It was also recognised they would need to consider other cross cutting areas of work, e.g. equality and inclusion and child poverty, whilst delivering against those priorities.

Ms. Purvis also informed the Committee that two Local Task and Finish Groups had been established, one for Health Inequalities, and one for Employment and Business Support.

The Chairman commented that any Members not present at the last meeting of the Committee could still put forward their requests to attend the task and finish groups if they so wished.

Councillor Cuthbert volunteered to attend the Employment and Business Support Task and Finish Group.

2. RESOLVED that Members:-

- (i) note the contents of this report
  - the Performance data relating to new issues raised would be evidenced through Customer Insight information from September 2010.
  - Health Inequalities Task and Finish Group would present to September 2010 Area Committee with a proposed work programme and estimated budget resource requirement.
  - Employment and Business Task and Finish Group would present to September 2010 Area Committee with a proposed work programme and estimated budget resource requirement.
- (ii) Washington Local Multi Agency Problem Solving Group (LMAPs) be invited to submit a SIB application to deliver programmes of work which address Anti Social Behaviour hotspots in Washington.

### **Community Action in Washington – Progress Review**

The Office of the Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) providing Members with details of issues previously identified through the 2009/10 Work Plan and Action Plans and updated with regard to progress or completion. The report also identified any unresolved issues and actions where Area Committee could consider a SIB or SIP funding application to address the issue or priority, or to facilitate a solution.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

In relation to the SIB funding request from Washington Glebe Banner Group, Councillor Wake commented that he had no objection to the application but queried the amount of funding being requested for a 'replica' banner rather than the maintenance or restoration of the original banner.

The Chairman advised that due to the fragile material of the original banner, it could not be used in a march, therefore creating the need for a replica.

In relation to the SIB funding request from Education Business Connections, the Chairman commented that the project focused on one particular school which was undergoing a number of issues that needed to be dealt with and although the recommendation was to approve the application, he requested Members' comments on an appropriate decision.

Councillor Miller commented that whilst it was a good project he did not believe the application met the criteria for SIB funding and was expensive in nature, and therefore raised questions. As it was a mainstream school, the funding should come out of their budget, and the application before the Committee should be rejected.

Councillor Wake also commented on the amount of funding requested for a project that would only benefit 30 pupils and agreed that the school should fund the project.

Councillor Cuthbert commented that he was in agreement that the application be rejected and enquired as to the decisions taken by the other Area Committees.

Ms. Purvis advised that it was her belief that the West Area Committee had approved the application.

With regards to the applications from Community Environmental Educational Developments (CEED) and Washington MIND, the Chairman proposed consideration of funding be deferred in order to allow the Health orientated Task and Finish Group the opportunity to report on what needs or gaps the Washington area had.

The Chairman also proposed the Washington MIND application be deferred as it requested funding over two years and due to budget constraints, this couldn't be guaranteed.

Councillor Cuthbert enquired if either of the projects would be cancelled, should the funding not be agreed at this meeting of the Committee.

Jacqui Reeves of Washington MIND advised that the Support Worker was already in post, and the funding was required to enable the service to continue

Councillor Williams agreed that the CEED application should be deferred but wished to move forward on funding the Washington MIND application as they provided a valuable preventative service.

Councillor Timmins commented that he would support the funding of the Washington MIND application as the role of the organisation was fundamental to the Mental Health Service.

Councillor I. Richardson also agreed to move forward with the Washington MIND application.

Councillor Miller agreed to defer the CEED application but felt only one year's funding could be granted to Washington MIND due to the uncertainty over budgets at this present time.

Councillor H. Trueman commented that although the SIB funding was not supposed to fund staff wages, this role was much needed and supported the one year funding proposal.

The Chairman proposed that Washington MIND be granted one year's funding of £14,700.

In relation to the Green Team Washington project, Ms. Purvis advised the Committee that the Officers' recommendation was to reject the application for the reasons set out in the report.

Councillor I. Richardson agreed with the recommendation and commented that with the programme of Wildlife Corridors, etc coming into place, the Council was already doing well in that area.

In relation to the SIP funding request from the Washington History Society for the Pattinson Boundary Sign project, the Chairman commented that Members had expressed concerns over the high cost of the sign and he had spoken to Officers and there were options that could reduce the price of the project.

Councillor Wake also queried the high price of the project, welcoming the possible options to reduce the cost and expressed concerns over the condition of all the signs at the Industrial Estates in Washington.

In relation to the SIP funding request from Usworth Colliery Primary School for the Chains of Hope project, the Chairman advised that he did not feel £7,000 funding was appropriate and after having discussions with the Head Teacher, they had agreed to the funding of £3,000 without the reduction having an affect on the application.

With regards to the allocation of SIP funding, Ms. Purvis advised that this needed to be concluded by the end of the financial year as any remaining funds may not be guaranteed to be carried forward.

The Chairman advised Members that any SIP applications needed to be submitted for the next meeting of the Committee.

3. RESOLVED that the Committee:-

- (i) note the financial statement for Area Committee funding for 2010/11;
- (ii) approve £10,000 as a contribution from the 2010/11 SIB budget for the Washington Glebe Banner project;
- (iii) reject the proposal to contribute £11,543 from the 2010/11 SIB budget to the Community Leaders (EBC) project;
- (iv) defer the proposal to contribute £22,835 from the 2010/11 SIB budget to the CEED project, until the Health Task and Finish Group had the opportunity to reports its findings to the Area Committee;
- (v) approve the amended proposal to contribute £14,770 (one year funding only) from the 2010/11 SIB budget to the Washington MIND – Recovery Support application;
- (vi) reject the proposal to contribute £40,950 from the 2010/11 SIB budget to the Green Team Washington project;
- (vii) approve the proposal to contribute £2,000 from the 2010/11 Washington Central SIP budget to the Village Sign (Washington Village in Bloom) project;

- (viii) approve the proposal to contribute £14,500 from the 2010/11 Washington East SIP budget to the Barmston Primary Community Wing project;
- (ix) approve the proposal to contribute £9,500 from the 2010/11 Washington East SIP budget to the Pattinson Boundary Sign project;
- (x) approve the proposal to contribute £7,500 from the 2010/11 Washington North SIP budget to the Inkerman Road Lay-by project;
- (xi) approve the proposal to contribute £3,500 from the 2010/11 Washington North SIP budget to the Miners Memorial (F Pit Banner Group) project;
- (xii) approve the amended proposal to contribute £3,000 from the 2010/11 Washington North SIP budget to the Chains of Hope (Usworth Colliery Primary School) project;
- (xiii) approve the proposal to contribute £10,981 from the 2010/11 Washington North SIP budget to the Lighting Cumberland/Coverdale project;
- (xiv) approve the proposal to contribute £11,809 from the 2010/11 Washington South SIP budget to the Ground Development (Washington Cricket Club) project;
- (xv) approve the proposal to contribute £650 from the 2010/11 Washington South SIP budget to the Goalposts Dunstanburgh and Lumley project;
- (xvi) approve the proposal to contribute £801 from the 2010/11 Washington South SIP budget to the Lambton Village Improvements project;
- (xvii) approve the proposal to contribute £1,657 from the 2010/11 Washington West SIP budget to the Additional Street Light to Side of Village Centre, Albany project;
- (xviii) approve the proposal to contribute £10,279 from the 2010/11 Washington West SIP budget to the Lighting Blackfell Multi Use Games Area project; and
- (xix) approve the 23 proposals for support from the 2010/11 Community Chest.

### **Influencing Practice, Policy and Strategy**

The Office of the Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which offered Members the opportunity for consultation on plans and strategies relevant to the Washington area. It also provided information and updates to encourage Members to feed into proposals for Service or policy change and facilitate the referral of outcomes of issues previously identified.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Raj Singh, Extended Services and Attendance Group Manager gave a presentation on the Child Poverty profile for the Washington Area.

(For copy presentation – see original minutes).

Mr. Singh briefed the Committee on the need to focus on 4-5 aspects to reduce Child Poverty in the area, these included Education and Childcare/Health/Family Support, Housing and Neighbourhoods, Financial Support and Parental Employment/Adult Skills.

Mr. Singh also advised of the needs assessment which was being carried out and had to be completed by the end of September. The Child Poverty Strategy included a detailed action plan.

The Chairman requested that Mr. Singh liaise with Ms. Purvis as the work he was undergoing interlinked with the Area task and finish groups work also.

Councillor I. Richardson commented that he would have liked to read the Child Poverty Strategy before this meeting in order for Members to be able to feed into the Strategy.

Councillor Timmins commented that he looked forward to reading the consultation document yet was startled by the high percentage levels of child poverty in the area.

Mr. Singh advised that there were 3½ million children in the country and the rise in poverty levels could also be the result of the new definition of poverty and how it was recorded.

Councillor Timmins commented that he accepted the figures can change due to the definitions of poverty and that we should be in a position to look at what has not worked in the past, to feed in to any new strategy.

Councillor Miller expressed his concern that Members had not received the consultation documents before the Committee meeting, therefore not being properly briefed. In relation to the Strategy, Councillor Miller advised that we needed to see the direction of travel to see if the Council was doing something right or wrong.

Councillor Miller commented on the disturbing figures for Washington and queried if the poverty agenda was too broad and if particular issues should be looked at instead.

Councillor Miller also raised concerns that the people we most needed to reach, generally would not partake in any consultations.

Councillor Williams questioned the differing definitions of poverty and how children in receipt of free school meals were counted, yet those in receipt of tax credits don't qualify for free school meals. Councillor Williams also believed that the only way to make a difference was to consult with those hard to reach people.

On the subject of how the figures are collated, in determining areas of deprivation etc, Councillor H. Trueman commented that factors such as single parent families were not taken into consideration and questioned how accurate the figures were.

Councillor H. Trueman also commented that declaring an area of deprivation potentially could create a great deal of harm by labelling an area eg in relation to house prices etc and he was startled at the high percentage of poverty reported.

The Chairman expressed concern that the consultation period was due to close at the end of September and Members had not been given sufficient time to feed in to the Strategy.

Having taken all of the comments on board, Mr. Singh acknowledged that a different approach was needed to consult with those hard to reach families as many would not come forward. Mr. Singh also acknowledged the different factors in determining poverty and apologised that the Strategy had not been circulated to Members before the meeting and proposed he attend a future meeting of the Committee if Members wished.

The Chairman suggested he feed into the Committees Task and Finish Groups and thanked Mr. Singh for his report.

The Chairman introduced Sue Morgan, Senior School Improvement Officer who provided a presentation on the questions raised by Members at a previous meeting on pupil performance at schools in Washington.

(For copy presentation – see original minutes).

Ms. Morgan advised that the data provided in the end of year report had not been provided by the School Improvement Team and was based on pupil performance rather than school performance, therefore not giving a true reflection due to cross boundary movement of pupils.

Ms. Morgan advised that a School Improvement Officer would now be in attendance of each Area Committee to respond to any questions about learning and teaching and could supply particular presentations if Members so wished.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Morgan for her presentation and welcomed her to the Committee.

The Chairman introduced Jane Ramshaw, Centre Manager of the Washington Wetland Centre who gave a verbal presentation on what the Centre offered, including Education, Volunteers Community involvement and Placements.

Ms. Ramshaw gave an open invitation for Members to visit the site or to contact her if they had any concerns/interests that they would like to pursue.

The Chairman encouraged greater partnership working and requested that Members consider ways of using the Centre.

Councillor I. Richardson commented that the Centre and the services provided were worth visiting and an asset to the area

4. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report and presentation on the Child Poverty Strategy be received and noted;
- (ii) the presentation of the School Improvement Team be noted; and
- (iii) the presentation of the Washington Wetland Centre be noted.

At the close of the meeting Councillor H. Trueman requested that the Area Committee acknowledge former Councillor, Derek Sleightholme and the fabulous work he had done through Washington Pride, which was due to disband and also requested a letter of thanks be sent to Mr. Sleightholme.

The Chairman agreed and requested the letter of thanks be sent as Mr. Sleightholme had proposed to donate all remaining funds from Washington Pride to the banner groups in the community.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

(Signed) J. KELLY,  
Chairman.